

**Evaluation of the
Indianapolis Mayor Sponsored
Charter Schools**

**Christel House DORS
Fourth-year Charter Review**

2015-2016 School Year

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION INNOVATION

Office of the Mayor of Indianapolis

FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

Christel House DORS

November 12-13 & 23, 2015

The Indianapolis Mayor's Office Fourth Year Charter Review (FYCR) is designed to assess the fourth year of the school as it fully implements the policies and procedures developed in the previous academic years. The Fourth Year Charter Review Protocol is based on the *Performance Framework*, which is used to determine a school's success relative to a common set of indicators, as well as school-based goals.

Consistent with the Indianapolis Mayor's Office Performance Framework, the following four core questions and sub-questions are examined to determine a school's success:

Is the educational program a success?

- 1.1. *Is the school's academic performance meeting state expectation, as measured by Indiana's accountability system?*
- 1.2. *Are students making sufficient and adequate gains, as measured by the Indiana Growth model?*
- 1.3. *Does the school demonstrate that students are improving, the longer they are enrolled at the school?*
- 1.4. *Is the school providing an equitable education to students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds?*
- 1.5. *Is the school's attendance rate strong?*
- 1.6. *Is the school outperforming schools that the students would have been assigned to attend?*
- 1.7. *Is the school meeting its school-specific educational goals?*

Is the organization in sound fiscal health?

- 2.1. *Short term Health: Does the school demonstrate the ability to pay its obligations in the next 12 months?*
- 2.2. *Long term Health: Does the organization demonstrate long term financial health?*
- 2.3. *Does the organization demonstrate it has adequate financial management and systems?*

Is the organization effective and well-run?

- 3.1. *Is the school leader strong in his or her academic and organizational leadership?*
- 3.2. *Does the school satisfactorily comply with all its organizational structure and governance obligations?*
- 3.3. *Is the school's board active, knowledgeable and abiding by appropriate policies, systems and processes in its oversight?*
- 3.4. *Does the school's board work to foster a school environment that is viable and effective?*
- 3.5. *Does the school comply with applicable laws, regulations and provision of the charter agreement relating to the safety and security of the facility?*

Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

- 4.1. *Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?*
- 4.2. *Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?*
- 4.3. *For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?*
- 4.4. *Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?*
- 4.5. *Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?*
- 4.6. *Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?*
- 4.7. *Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?*
- 4.8. *Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?*
- 4.9. *Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?*
- 4.10. *Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?*

COMPLETION OF THE FOURTH YEAR CHARTER REVIEW

As part of its oversight of charter schools, the Mayor's Office authorized Research & Evaluation Resources (RER) to conduct site visits of schools in their fourth year of operation. The purpose is to present the school and the Mayor's Office a professional judgment on conditions and practices at the school, which are best provided through an external perspective. This report uses multiple sources of evidence to understand the school's performance. Evidence collection begins before the visit with the review of key documents and continues on-site through additional document review, classroom visits and interviews with any number of stakeholders. Findings provided by the site visit team can be used to celebrate what the school is doing well and prioritize its areas for improvement in preparation for renewal. It is the task of the site visit team to report on the following pre-identified aspects of the *Performance Framework* and to assist the Mayor's Office in its completion of the FYCR Protocol: ***Responses to sub-questions 4.1- 4.10 of Core Question 4.***

The outcome of this review will provide the school with written report that includes a judgment and supporting evidence on various aspects of the school, based on a rubric of indicators¹ developed for each of the four core questions and sub-questions in the *Performance Framework*. The assessment system utilizes the following judgments:

Does not meet standard

Approaching standard

Meets standard

¹ Rubric indicators are subject to revision by the Mayor's Office.

Christel House DORS Mission

Christel House DORS empowers students by providing them the tools necessary to achieve high school graduation and post-secondary success. DORS will reengage students who have previously left the educational system and allow students to choose their individual pathway to academic success. DORS will serve as a gateway for students to realize their hopes and dreams by becoming self-sufficient, contributing members of society.

Background and History of Christel House DORS

Christel House DORS South received its charter from the Mayor of Indianapolis' Office of Education Innovation in 2011 and opened in August 2012 providing instruction to students in grades 9-12. Christel House DORS met its initial enrollment target of 175 students and has increased enrollment from the year one goal to 199 in years 2 and 3, and 250 at year 4.

Christel House DORS is an adult high school that grants high school diplomas through a blended curriculum. Through a unique partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, Christel House DORS students have the opportunity to attend classes being held on the Ivy Tech Campus in downtown Indianapolis, which is one of the two instructional sites used by DORS. Having courses taught at Ivy Tech offers many advantages, with two of the most prominent being the exposure of Christel House DORS students to the college community and the opportunity for students to take dual credit college courses while still working toward their high school diploma.

Christel House DORS also offers classes in the evening at the Christel House Academy/Watanabe High School wing on the city's southside. Interestingly, the day and the evening courses attract very different student demographics, with the Ivy Tech campus students younger and predominantly African-American. Many of these students are unemployed or underemployed, and are enrolled at Christel House DORS in order to improve their employment prospects. The evening courses held at the Christel House Academy attract a very diverse group of students, many who are English as a Second Language Learners, and who are often employed full time and are working toward their high school diploma as well.

Support Services at Christel House DORS

Christel House DORS has created the position of Resource Specialist to provide support for students as they work toward their high school diploma. Resource Specialists provide counseling, academic advising and social work services to Christel House DORS students. The Resource Specialists have many responsibilities, and are crucial to student retention and student success. Some of their duties include, but are definitely not limited to, providing counseling to students who are experiencing problems at home or at school, and when possible, finding community or school-based resources to overcome these obstacles, encouraging the students to work with the Christel House DORS teaching staff and leadership should they experience a failure or disappointment in their

academic work., and engaging in the process of implementing an individualized Learning Plan based on the analysis of student assessments and academic data. An additional support position is that of the Assessor. The Assessors create the Learning Plans and schedules for each Christel House DORS student, as well as keep academic records and any records dealing with social work related issues. They perform student intake duties and are also tasked with maintaining student records, and most importantly, working with the teaching staff to ensure that the teachers are aware of any outside factors that may be affecting their student's academic performance. The Assessors also serve as academic advisors for those students who have completed the basic coursework and are currently taking their classes online, assessing the students' online work and providing feedback regarding their performance.

The Christel House DORS Curriculum

Christel House DORS utilizes a unique blended model that focuses on providing students with the skills they need to succeed through a series of traditional courses, such as Algebra 1A, Algebra 1B and English 9 and 10 that focus on content covered in the Indiana End of Course Assessments. Once a student has completed these courses and passed their ECA's, they continue their education through the use of the National External Diploma Program, or NEDP, which is a nationally recognized competency based program. NEDP is a portfolio based program that is currently aligned to the 21st Century workforce readiness skills, but can be adapted by the school staff to meet the standards of other states, as has been done at Christel House DORS. An additional resource that is still available to students is the APEX Learning online curriculum. The courses offered by APEX are also aligned to the Common Core, as well as to Indiana state standards. The students who are working predominantly online can work at their own pace, either onsite or at home. The role of the Assessor is to design a student's schedule, monitor their progress on NEDP, and provide advice and encouragement should the student encounter any roadblocks. The process at Christel House DORS is truly a blended model, with a rigorous online curriculum combined with direct and differentiated instruction.

In addition to the English and Math courses offered on the two campuses, the Christel House DORS curriculum also includes several courses to provide the students with any basic academic skills they may need before taking the Algebra and English ECA sequences. These courses provide remediation in math and language arts necessary for further coursework. A key additional support offered by Christel House DORS, particularly given the large number of students who do not speak English, are the ESL courses. There are two ESL pathways that students follow when they enter Christel House DORS. Along with other ESL students they form a "cohort" that is enrolled in either a higher level or a lower level pathway through the ESL training. The higher level pathway is for students with some command of English, and the lower level pathway is for students with limited knowledge of spoken or written English. Students are placed into either course based on their WIDA scores and the judgment of the ESL coordinator. Both are full courses with direct instruction and small group work.

Gateway to College

Christel House DORS, in a collaborative partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, is employing the Gateway to College model. This model empowers students who have dropped out of high school or are not on track to graduate to earn a diploma and dual credit in a supportive college environment. Christel House DORS is part of a national network of Gateway to College schools. The program was created by Portland Community College in 2000 to help reconnect high school dropouts with their education. Through the program, students complete their high school diploma requirements at community and technical colleges while simultaneously earning college credits toward an associate's degree or certificate. Young people who had little chance of graduating from high school are achieving post-secondary success.

The Christel House DORS Gateway to College implementation of the model places students into the Ivy Tech college level courses based on the ACCUPLACER assessment. Students who are eligible to take courses at Ivy Tech will receive high school and college credit. The DORS Assessors help students enroll in Ivy Tech courses and provide ongoing support to ensure that the students are successful. These courses are taught by Ivy Tech instructors or qualified DORS instructors and follow the approved Ivy Tech syllabi.

School Specific Goals

The leadership at Christel House DORS has set for themselves an ambitious set of school specific goals. The first performance goal, that DORS students will earn their high school diploma, is straightforward and will be measured by the number of students receiving their high school degree. A second goal is for a majority of DORS students to successfully complete a College/Career reading course before graduation, as well as completing a post-secondary plan.

The Evaluation Process

This report represents an evaluation about performance in each of the standards and indicators that are the responsibility of RER to evaluate. These indicators: 4.1 through 4.10 are outlined in the Performance Framework.

Research & Evaluation Resources staff engaged in a number of evidence-collecting activities. The focus of this evaluation was to gauge perceptions of key stakeholders at the school in relation to the areas of the performance framework that are part of the evaluation. RER conducted focus group discussions with students, staff, and school administration. These focus groups and interviews were conducted over a 2-day period, with the classroom observations, teacher and student focus groups, as well as leadership interviews completed on November 12 and 13, as part of the site visit. Additional information was gathered from Lindsey Roache, Assistant Head of DORS, Carey Dahncke, Chief Academic Officer/Director of Christel House Academy and Sarah Weimer, Head of Curriculum and Instruction on November 23, 2015.

Five classrooms were observed using the instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. Each observation lasted approximately 30 minutes, and all of the teaching staff was observed once, with one member of the teaching staff being observed once during the day session and once during the evening session. Classroom observers spent 2.6 hours (165 minutes) observing 5 classrooms, 58 students, and 4 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 31 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 11:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

In the following report, standards and indicators are listed with relevant evidence given related to the performance criteria. Following the discussion of each indicator, a summary of strengths and areas for attention are provided for the core question.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

CHRISTEL HOUSE DORS

<i>Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?</i>	<i>Finding</i>
<i>4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?</i>	Not Applicable
<i>4.9 Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?</i>	Meets Standard
<i>4.10 Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as Second Language (ESL) students?</i>	Meets Standard

Standard 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum does not align with the state standards; b) the school does not conduct systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school does not regularly review scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) the sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas does not focus on core (prioritized) learning objectives; e) the staff lacks understanding and/or consensus as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction; f) there is a lack of programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.
Meets standard	The school: a) curriculum aligns with the state standards; b) conducts systematic reviews of its curriculum to identify gaps based on student performance; c) the school regularly reviews scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing; d) has a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focuses on the core learning objectives; e) the staff understands and uniformly uses curriculum documents and related program materials to effectively deliver instruction; f) programs and materials are available to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Christel House DORS uses a blended learning model to meet the needs of their students, combining classroom based instruction with online resources. In the Christel House DORS model, students are tested during matriculation for their basic academic skills and are then placed in "traditional" courses, such as Algebra 1a and 1B, to prepare them for the End of Course Assessments. Once they complete their ECAs they move to the online curriculum, the National External Diploma Program, or NEDP, which is supplemented with tutorials and exercises from the APEX online system. NEDP is a portfolio based program that is currently aligned to workforce readiness skills, but can be adapted by the school staff to meet the standards of other states, as has been done at Christel House DORS. The traditional classroom instruction is also aligned to the state standards (indicator a). A complete systematic review of the curriculum by Christel House DORS is not possible because much of it is online and at the student's own pace (indicator b), but curriculum maps provided for the Algebra and Language Arts series of courses revealed a scope and sequence of topics that is designed to meet the needs of the unique students at DORS, while preparing them for the ECA exams that they must pass (indicator c). The curriculum maps for these courses are common across the two DORS sites, but when asked during focus group interviews regarding freedom to adjust the pacing, one teacher responded that "We have a well laid out framework and pacing guide-- but I can make quite a few adjustments" and another noted "we move things around-- there is some room in the curriculum for us to add real work applications and make it relevant to their lives." There is not a sequence of topics across grade levels per se at Christel House DORS, but the sequence of topics

and content of these courses do prioritize learning and focus on core learning objectives (indicator d).

The teaching staff has designed courses that strengthen the blended model employed by Christel House DORS. During focus groups interviews the teaching staff noted that they had a variety of related materials and documents of their own design to enhance the student's learning experience (indicator e). These courses are an excellent preparation for both the ECA's and the transition to the NEDP online curriculum.

Programs and materials are available for the teaching staff to deliver the curriculum effectively in the classrooms (indicator f). An important and welcome improvement has been made in the arrangement made for classroom space with Ivy Tech and Christel House DORS. Unlike previous years when Christel House DORS faculty did not have a classroom of their own, each teacher now has their own classroom that they can arrange as they wish, and where they can keep their materials permanently.

Areas of Strength: The teaching staff at Christel House DORS are expertly enacting a true blended model of adult education. They are also reflectively modifying their classroom practices to provide the best possible educational experience for their students.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) the curriculum is not implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is not focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery lacks the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities lack variety and/or limited use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) staff do not receive feedback on instructional practices.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design; b) as delivered, instruction is focused on core learning objectives; c) the pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge; d) instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities and learning needs; e) supplies sufficient feedback to staff on instructional practices.

The curriculum for the Algebra and Language Arts classes that are delivered via direct instruction at Christel House DORS is being implemented in the classroom according to its design in 5 out of 5 classrooms (indicator a), and as delivered the curriculum is focused on core learning objectives in 5 out of 5 classrooms (indicator b). The pace of instruction and content delivery possessed the appropriate level of rigor and challenge, and it should be noted, was also delivered in such a way that students at many different skill levels were able to engage in and learn from the lesson provided (indicator c). The classroom instructors were observed to be using a mix of direct instruction and individual and group work. The small class sizes meant that instruction was often differentiated (indicator d), particularly in the ESL and remediation courses, which were also noteworthy in the use of core-learning objectives and appropriate rigor. In particular, the ESL courses were designed to prepare students for "English as an academic language" as noted by Ms. Anna Yonkers, the ESL instructor for Christel House DORS. The students were not engaging in conversational English, rather they were learning what they needed to know to be educated in English. The ESL courses, as well as the Math Lab and English Lab courses, provide Christel House DORS students with a strong foundation upon which to build the rest of their education.

Interviews with the Christel House DORS Principal, Emily Masengale, revealed that they are implementing the teacher evaluation tool developed for the Christel House Academy system (indicator e), and the teaching staff reported that they receive frequent feedback on their teaching.

Areas of Strength: Christel House DORS is providing high quality blended instruction for their students.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.3 For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support and preparation for post-secondary options?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in two or more of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) there is a lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance are available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in one of the following areas: a) the school's academic program lacks challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) there is a lack of high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) insufficient material resources and personnel guidance are available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) limited opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) the school does not meet Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.
Meets standard	The school: a) has challenging coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study) to prepare students for rigorous post-secondary opportunities; b) has high expectations to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities; c) has sufficient material resources and personnel guidance available to inform students of post-secondary options; d) presents opportunities for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options; e) meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements.

The NEDP online curriculum, in conjunction with the direct instruction courses offered, meet or exceed the Core 40 graduation requirements, and students are encouraged to excel and move ahead in their goal of attaining a high school diploma (indicator e).

The partnership between Christel House DORS and Ivy Tech offers students a unique opportunity to engage in challenging coursework (indicator a) and sets high expectations to motivate and prepares students for post-secondary opportunities (indicator b). The obvious strength of the partnership with Ivy Tech is the ease with which Christel House DORS students can enroll in Ivy Tech classes, and all students are encouraged to take Ivy Tech courses to fulfill their graduation requirement. However, many Christel House DORS students want to explore post-secondary opportunities outside of higher education, and Christel House DORS has expanded their offering of certification courses to meet that need. Additionally, students can now either complete one course at Ivy Tech or complete a certification to fulfill their post-secondary experience required to graduate from Christel House DORS.

Christel House DORS has sufficient material resources and personnel available to inform students of post-secondary options (indicator c). The support of the Resource Specialists and the Assessors is invaluable to Christel House DORS students as they consider their opportunities after their high school diploma. Interviews with the Resource Specialists and the Assessors revealed staff members

who were knowledgeable about career options, community resources and post-secondary possibilities.

Because of the unique nature of Christel House DORS students, there is very little attention paid to extra-curricular activities such as athletics and clubs. Christel House DORS does provide activities that relate to college and career success, such as campus trips to local universities and college and career events. They also provide students with many opportunities to create a sense of community, such as potluck dinners, movie nights for the family, and other opportunities to socialize.

Areas of Strength: The staff at Christel House DORS are supportive of the students achieving their goal of earning a high school diploma, and equally important, the staff encourages the students to set ambitious goals for their lives after they have their diploma.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are not accurate or useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are not received by classroom teachers in a timely or useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments lack sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is limited frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are not used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.
Meets standard	The school: a) standardized and/or classroom assessments are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives; b) assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions; c) assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities; d) there is sufficient frequency or use of assessments to inform instructional decisions effectively; e) assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

The NEDP online learning system used at Christel House DORS provides a large bank of assessments tools that are accurate and useful measures of the learning standards and objectives in each course (indicator a). One of the primary roles of the Assessors is to weekly monitor students progress through the use of NEDP assessments and portfolio activities. The Assessors can then provide encouragement to those students who may not be working at an appropriate rate, and positive feedback to those students who are progressing toward their goal of a high school diploma. The online assessments provided by NEDP are available to the Assessors immediately (indicator b), and in a focus group interview the Assessors noted that they find the APEX assessment data accurate and useful.

To add to the variety of assessments used at Christel House DORS, the teaching staff will often develop assessments for classroom use (indicator c). These are teacher scored tests and quizzes and are included in the students' final grade. In addition to quizzes and tests, essays and papers are also assigned to ensure that the students increase their writing skills as well. A logical focus of these courses is preparing students for the ECAs, and to that end, classroom assessments are often customized to the needs of the students. For example, one teacher noted that "I have to address the writing part of the ECAs and our students have a tough time writing...so all go through draft and editing... self-edit, teacher edit and peer edit."

The NEDP assessments, as well as the formal and informal classroom assessments, ensure that the students are assessed with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions (indicator d). Additionally, the staff at Christel House DORS meet weekly with the Resource Specialists and the Assessors to review student data and assess student progress. They also noted that nearly every

morning they took the opportunity to discuss any students who may be struggling academically or personally. These conversations directly led to added attention from the staff if the problem was minor, or adjustments in the student's learning plan if the problem was major (indicator e). One of the strengths of Christel House DORS is the individualized use of student data to assess each individual student's progress. As was noted by a teacher, "we look at everyone's data and then customize what we do for that student that day...our leadership is data driven and they always make sure 3 to 4 sets of eyes see each student's data." Another noted, "we don't do blanket adjustments (to the curriculum)...we keep track of the individuals data."

Areas of Strength: The teaching staff at Christel House DORS uses to data to inform practice at all levels of the curriculum.

The teaching staff has effectively added a variety of assessment in addition to those provide by NEDP to ensure that they have an accurate picture of how their students are progressing.

The Assessors effectively uses the data provided by NEDP to monitor their students' progress and to step in when necessary.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) hiring processes are not organized to support the success of new staff members; b) inefficient or insufficient deployment of faculty and staff limits instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are not certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) does not relate to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD is not determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is not explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members; b) the school deploys sufficient number of faculty and staff to maximize instructional time and capacity; c) faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned; d) professional development (PD) is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement; e) PD opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement; f) the teacher evaluation plan is explicit and regularly implemented with a clear process and criteria.

All teachers at Christel House DORS are certified or credentialed in their teaching area. The majority of the teachers are teaching a course load that appears manageable, and the various staff members have distinct roles. The teachers are all teaching in areas in which they are certified. Overall, the staff is deployed to best utilize their skills and training (indicators b & c). Hiring process are organized around the mission of Christel House DORS, with Ms. Masengale explaining that Christel House DORS posts job openings through the Indiana Department of Education, as well as other outlets. When examining candidates, the Christel House DORS leadership and looks for candidates with the appropriate credentials for the content area, as well as experience with at risk students. Candidates must also express the desire to work with students who have dropped out of high school once, and in many cases may be older than the teacher. Finally in order to fit with the mission of Christel House DORS, the candidate must express the willingness to go beyond traditional classroom practices and become engaged in the success of their students at a very high level (indicator a). New teachers at Christel House DORS are also supported through an informal mentorship with the Assistant Principal, Ms. Roache, who checks in with the new teacher on a regular basis, performs informal classroom observations, and assists with testing.

The professional development offered at Christel House DORS is related to the need for instructional improvement (indicator d). As reported by the teaching staff, the professional development offered focuses on improving classroom practices through collaboration with other DORS instructors from the West campus. They noted activities such as gallery walks, cross-subject and collaborative planning, and integration of technology in the classroom. This last topic,

technology in the classroom, was specifically asked for by the teaching staff in the previous site visit and review. The teaching staff also reported that they are encouraged by school leadership to attend conferences in their areas of interest and to bring their new knowledge back to their colleagues. Because of the recent changes in the curriculum --the move to traditional classwork leading to the ECAs and then online coursework, in particular--there has not been student data available to guide professional development (indicator e). The leadership at Christel House DORS is encouraged to begin tracking data for the purpose of motivating future professional development opportunities.

The teaching staff conveyed that they fully understood the teaching evaluation system being implemented at Christel House DORS (indicator f). Informal classroom observations occur frequently, and the staff conveyed that they are also evaluated formally on a regular basis. In addition to Ms. Masengale or Ms. Roache being in the classroom "almost every day," the evaluation rubric is shared before the observations, and 2 announced and 2 unannounced formal observations are performed per year. The staff reported that post-evaluation conferences happen soon after the observation, and during that conference they are asked to self- assess their own teaching, which is then aligned with the impressions of the school leadership. The teachers expressed satisfaction with their evaluation, noting that "they (the school leaders) are forthright and upfront with what they expect and they will communicate it with you." Another noted that "the rubric is posted online and all of your observations and comments are put up (online) really quickly."

Areas of Strength: The current teacher evaluation system is in place and providing good information to staff and leadership.

Recommendations: Providing professional development based on the analysis of student attainment and improvement should be offered as soon as the data on the new curriculum is gathered.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>both</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) significant disagreements exist among stakeholders about the school's mission; b) there is a lack of widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.
Meets standard	The school: a) has a mission that is shared by all stakeholders; b) has stakeholders possessing widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission.

The mission of Christel House DORS is shared and well understood by all stakeholders (indicators a & b). Focus group interviews with staff and students revealed that they had common views regarding the mission and goals of Christel House DORS. One member of the teaching staff noted the expanded mission of DORS went beyond providing and education and into "empowering people to have control over their lives--not just their academic work." Another noted the mission is to "give students back the power.. to advocate for themselves." Finally, it was noted that "the mission plays itself out every day."

Interviews with the teaching staff and with the Resource Specialists and Assessors revealed a remarkable working relationship that is always mindful of the mission of Christel House DORS. When asked about the role of Resources Specialists, the teaching staff noted that they were essential to the success of the Christel House DORS mission. A Resource Specialist described the position as "I support the staff that supports the student," which is indicative of the collaborative nature of the relationship.

Areas of Strength: The Mission of Christel House DORS is well understood by staff and leadership, all of whom are very dedicated to bringing that mission to their students.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address them: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and/or unproductive.
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas with no evidence of a credible plan to address it: a) The school does not have clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach does not possess high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are disrespectful and/or unsupportive and there are non-existing or unclear processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are unprofessional and /or unproductive.
Meets standard	The school exhibits the following characteristics: a) the school has clearly stated rules that enforce positive behavior; b) the school's discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior; c) interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts; d) interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive.

The culture at Christel House DORS is one of respect and support between students and staff. Christel House DORS students have come to the school to have a second chance at their high school diploma and they value the staff and their fellow students. Christel House DORS has clearly stated rules that enforce student behavior, with both a published student and staff handbooks readily available (indicator a). The discipline plan possesses high expectation for student behavior (indicator b), with expectations regarding student behavior clearly outlined in the student handbook. The handbook is given to students during orientation and they must sign a document stating that they understand all student policies.

Interactions between students and staff are respectful and supportive, with students noting during the focus group that "The culture here is good. The culture is respectful and there isn't any bullying" (indicator c). In those rare instances when a violation of the discipline code occurs, the teacher writes a report using an "intervention form," which is available on GoogleDocs. The teachers and the student support staff both have access to these forms, which provide a line of communication between teachers and student supports. The staff noted that once they submit the intervention form, school leadership responds quickly to the issue described. The culture at DORS was accurately described by one teacher, "They (the students) aren't here to have their time wasted. We have a few issues here and there-- sometimes they are angry about what's going on in their life-- but they are adults and they police themselves really well." Interactions between faculty and administrations were also observed to be respectful, professional and supportive (indicator d).

Essential to the culture of Christel House DORS is the role of the student support staff-- the Resource Specialists and Assessors. These staff members provide much more than academic advising and schedule planning for students. Much of their work revolves around the students' lives outside of school, and in that capacity the student support staff will often find themselves performing home visits, texting and phoning students who are missing classes, texting and phoning

the friends and families of students who are missing classes. The student support staff also works with students to improve their soft skills, such as resume writing, interview skills, and career transitions. These staff members also provide crucial support to the ESL population of DORS, translating forms, interpreting during intake and throughout the school year, and making the procedures associated with attending high school more accessible to non-speakers of English.

Areas of Strength: Staff, students and the school leadership are all in agreement regarding the positive behaviors expected of the students.

Recommendations: None at this time.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?	
Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the following areas: a) there is a lack of active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) school communication is neither timely nor relevant to the parental concerns; c) student academic progress and achievement reports are not clearly reported and/or misunderstood; d) the school's communication methods are not well-designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., not communicating in parents' native languages, communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at inconvenient times for parents).
Meets standard	The school: a) has active and ongoing communication between the school and parents; b) utilizes communications that are both timely and relevant to the parental concerns; c) communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents; d) the school's communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

The student population of Christel House DORS is over 18, and there are very few whose parents are involved in their education, consequently this particular standard does not apply.

4.9. Do the school's special education files demonstrate that it is in legal compliance and is moving towards best practice?	
Does not meet standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Approaching standard	The school's special education files present concerns in <u>one</u> or more of the following areas: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) do not adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP does not have a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) all goals are not rigorous or based on state or national learning standards; d) evidence does not demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student developed; e) specifically designed curriculum is not outlined.
Meets standard	All of the following are evident in the school's special education files: a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

Christel House Academy West & Christel House DORS South: Fall, 2015

Special Education Audit

Azure DS Angelov, Ph.D.

This report compiles a review of all practices and procedures specific to special education services at Christel House Academy West & Christel House DORS South (CHA). The results of this evaluation are based on the following pieces of data collected onsite: classroom observations, review of internal processes and procedural manuals, interviews with general education and special education staff, interviews with students with IEPs, review of 25% of IEPs housed at CHA, DOE data bases, CHA website, and follow up interviews with eligible families of students with IEPs at CHA.

All of the following are evident in the school's special education files: (a) services outlined within Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) adequately match the exceptional needs of the student; (b) each need identified within the IEP has a corresponding goal and plan for assessment; (c) each goal is rigorous and is based on state and national learning standards; (d) explicit evidence exists to demonstrate that goals have evolved each year as the student develops; (e) specifically designed curriculum is outlined.

Both CHA sites are moving forward in providing high quality special education services. Currently, CHA DORS has an extremely small number of students with IEPs and CHA South has a growing population. Students with IEPs are making academic growth and IEP files are legally compliant. Currently, CHA meets all the indicators outlined in standard 4.9.

4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?	
Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in order to achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Approaching standard	The school is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement to fully achieve conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.
Meets standard	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: a) appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; b) relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Christel House DORS has one ESL teacher, Ms. Anna Yonkers, and two ESL aides who work with Ms. Yonkers. Ms. Yonkers is knowledgeable in current legislation regarding the education of ESL students, and is familiar with Indiana's English Language Proficiency Standards. Ms. Yonkers also displayed a great deal of understanding and familiarity with the goals of these standards and the how they are to be implemented.

Ms. Yonkers is also very familiar with the Indiana Department of Education Office of English Language Learning & Migrant Education Guidelines to Satisfy Legal Requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Ms. Yonkers has begun many effective ESL practices to ensure that Christel House DORS is in compliance with these standards, including (but not limited to) providing students with the mandated language proficiency testing within 30 days, placement of ESL students in the courses that are suitable for their language competency, and providing supports and services to help her students with their socio-emotional adjustments as well (indicator a).

Ms. Yonkers also ensures that relationships with external providers are well-managed and comply with the law (indicator b). As noted above, Ms. Yonkers provides services that comply with Indiana state law, as well as with the standards and best practices required by the Indiana Department of Education. Because the Christel House DORS students are all adults, Ms. Yonkers is not obligated to notify their parents of their ESL placement, however, she does provide her students with a great deal of information regarding their English proficiency and their test scores, ensuring that they understand the reasons behind their ESL placement.

Ms. Yonkers teaches the ESL courses that prepare Christel House DORS students for the academic work that is required for a high school diploma. Ms. Yonkers has an excellent relationship with the Christel House DORS teaching staff, and works with them to both to ensure that her classes prepare the ESL students for the coursework in English, and also that after they have moved into the non-ESL classes that they are able to thrive. The Christel House DORS staff are also invested in

the success of their ESL students, with all of them completing SIOP training.

Ms. Allison Walters, who is the ESL testing supervisor for both Christel House DORS sites, administers the ACCESS portion of the WIDA and works with Ms. Yonkers to design and administer the ESL courses. Ms. Walters has experience in ESL education in other states, and brings that expertise to Christel House DORS, to the great benefit of its students. She has created the ESL curriculum map for Christel House DORS, as well as finding the materials being used. Ms. Yonkers and Ms. Walters show a remarkable understanding of the challenges of educating an ESL population in the context of the Christel House DORS blended learning model, and have designed a program that is unique in the rigor of the ESL courses, focusing on teaching "academic English" rather than conversational English, and providing their students with a solid foundation for their later studies. The importance of the work Ms. Yonkers and Ms. Walters do with their students cannot be underestimated.

Areas of Strength: ESL services at Christel House DORS meet both mandate practices and are implemented using ESL best practices.

Recommendations: None at this time.

Appendix A:

Christel House DORS Classroom Observation Summary

Five classrooms were observed using the instrument provided by the Office of Education Innovation. Each observation lasted approximately 30 minutes, and all of the teaching staff was observed once, with one member of the teaching staff being observed once during the day session and once during the evening session. Classroom observers spent 2.6 hours (165 minutes) observing 5 classrooms, 58 students, and 4 teachers. On average, each observation lasted 31 minutes and the observed student to teacher ratio was 11:1. Two of the teachers were observed by both classroom observers at the same time in order to ensure inter-judge reliability.

Classroom Environment

100% (5/5) had posted objectives. 0% (0/5) had posted state standards. 100% (5/5) used critical vocabulary. 100% (5/5) had challenging content. 100% (5/5) exhibited differentiation. 100% (5/5) of the instruction observed built on prior knowledge.

Learning Environment

The observers categorized observed learning experiences into four main categories. 100% (5/5) of observed activities included Remember/Understand Activities. 100% (5/5) included Apply/Perform Activities. 100% (5/5) included Analyze/Evaluate Activities. 0% (0/5) included Create/Design Activities. 0% (0/5) of activities were found to be ineffective.

100% (5/5) of classrooms contained rich print materials. 80% (4/5) showed examples of exemplary work. 20% (1/5) displayed a daily schedule. 20% (1/5) had posted behavior expectations. 80% (4/5) had culturally relevant materials.

Proportion of Students Engaged During:	All		Most		Half		Few		None	
	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total	#	% Total
First Interval	4	80%	4	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Second Interval	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Third Interval	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%